Conclusion

This concludes our report on the in-depth interviews conducted with our sample of 30 Bengali families in Cardiff. While the sample is small, and generalisation rendered difficult, it is our opinion that the approach we have utilised enables a more reliable picture to be built up than would have been the case by using alternative questionnaire and scaling methods. We are confident that the project has adequately demonstrated the necessity of teachers, social workers, community relations officers and social administrators, recognising the existence of sub-group variations in belief systems, values, and cultural 'mores' — variations which can endow such sub-cultural groups with a high degree of identity and autonomy. However, the general picture which emerges is a reasonably optimistic one, and if state agencies accept the minority groups for what they are without trying to change and assimilate them, and if schools are sensitive and responsive to the needs of minorities and propound essential learning, freedom, tolerance and cosmopolitanism, then "cultural difference" rather than "cultural deficiency" could become a guiding concept leading to a truly multicultural situation.

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NOTES ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 'SUBJECTIVE VITALITY QUESTIONNAIRE' FOR ETHNOLINGUISTIC GROUPS

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Abstract. Group 'vitality' was recently proposed as a framework for objectively categorizing ethnolinguistic groups in terms of their ability to behave as distinctive collective entities in intergroup settings (Giles, Bourhis & Taylor, 1977). 'Objective' accounts of group vitality using status, demographic and institutional support data gathered from secondary sources appear a useful tool for comparing ethnolinguistic groups in cross-cultural research. This article describes a new questionnaire designed to assess how group members subjectively perceive their owngroup position relative to salient outgroups on important 'vitality' dimensions. Group members' 'subjective' vitality perceptions may be as important in determining interethnic behaviours as the Group's objectively assessed vitality. The article includes a discussion of how 'objective' and 'subjective' vitality information can be combined to better account for the dynamics of inter-ethnic relations in multilingual and multicultural settings.

Recently, social psychologists have devoted an increasing amount of attention to the study of intergroup relations (Billig, 1976; Austin & Worchel, 1979). In both Europe and North America much of this interest has focused on the dynamics of inter-ethnic conflict (Tajfel, 1978) and cross-cultural communication (Bourhis, 1979). Though too often ignored by social psychologists, situational and structural variables can have an important impact on the sociopsychological climate of inter-ethnic relations. In an attempt to account for the role of sociostructural variables on the social psychology of inter-ethnic relations and cross-cultural communication, Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) proposed a framework for assessing the ethnolinguistic 'vitality' of speech communities. According to Giles *et al* (1977) the 'vitality' of an ethnolinguistic group was defined as "that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive

and active collective entity in intergroup situations". Giles *et al* (1977) pointed out that the 'vitality' of ethnolinguistic groups could be conveniently assessed by considering three classes of factors: these are namely *status, demography and institutional support factors*.

Very briefly, the status variables are those which pertain to a speech community's economic wealth, its social status, its socio-historical prestige and the status of the language used by its speakers. It was proposed that the more status a linguistic community is recognized to have on these dimensions, the more vitality it could be said to possess as a collective entity.

The demographic variables are those related to the sheer number of members included in the speech community and their distribution throughout a particular urban, regional or national territory. More specifically, distribution factors refer to the numeric concentration of group members in various parts of the 'territory', and their proportion relative to outgroup members, and whether or not the group still occupies its 'traditional' or 'national' territory. Number factors refer to the community's absolute group numbers, their birth rate and their patterns of immigration and emigration.

Institutional support factors (i.e., Breton, 1971) refer to the extent to which a language group enjoys formal and informal representation in the various institutions of a community, region or nation. It was suggested that the vitality of a speech community was related to the degree its speakers could use their own language in various institutions such as the home, the school system, local government, church, business, etc.

Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) proposed that each of these factors may affect in one direction or the other the vitality of a speech community. It was also proposed that linguistic communities could be meaningfully grouped according to the above three factored view of vitality on the basis of readily available sociological and demographic information. Using such a framework, speech communities can be roughly classified as possessing low, medium or high vitality. This categorization scheme is helpful in clearly identifying and comparing the types of ethnolinguistic groups one is dealing with in cross-cultural research. It was proposed that the configuration of sociopsychological processes operating between ethnolinguistic groups in contact may vary according to the ethnolinguistic vitality of the speech communities in question. For instance Sachdev & Bourhis (1980) suggested that patterns of intergroup discrimination could well differ according to whether group members belong to high, medium or low vitality groups. Reviews of the sociolinguistic literature (Giles, Bourhis and Taylor, 1977) suggest that such sociostructural factors can not only influence the decision to acquire a second language (Gardner, 1979; Giles & Byrne, 1980; Clément, 1980; deVries, 1980) but may also influence patterns of language usage between speakers of contrastive ethnolinguistic groups and gender categories (Bourhis, 1979; Bourhis & Genesee, 1980; Liebkind, 1979; Kramarae, 1981).

So far in the literature the discussion of vitality factors has focused mainly on 'objective' assessment of vitality. The procedure has been to consult demo-

graphic,economic,sociological and historical documents to arrive at an 'objective' an assessment of a group's vitality as possible. But do ethnolinguistic group members perceive 'subjectively' their situation along the same lines as the 'objective' accounts would suggest? How group members integrate the 'subjective' assessment of their group vitality position with 'objective' vitality information is a necessarily complex process (Billig, 1976). However complex the process may be, it is sufficient to point out here that a group's subjective assessment of its vitality may be as important in determining inter-ethnic behaviours as the group's 'objective' vitality (Giles, 1979; Giles & Johnson, 1981). Furthermore, group member's subjective assessment of outgroup member's ethnolinguistic vitality may also be crucial in determining patterns of intergroup behaviours. Group members may systematically minimize or exaggerate the ethnolinguistic vitality of their own group or salient outgroups depending on how they perceive the intergroup relation situations (e.g. conflictual or harmonious) and depending on the group strategies (Tajfel, 1978a) they wish to adopt in intergroup encounters. For instance, it is possible for dominant groups to manipulate the information reaching subordinate groups (through the mass media and education) in such a way as to attenuate the subordinate group's perception of its own vitality. If successful, such a strategy may effectively demoralize subordinate groups members who may otherwise have reasons and resources to challenge the legitimacy of the dominant group. Conversely, vocal minorities within subordinate groups may exaggerate the assessment of their own group vitality in order to better mobilize ingroup members against dominant outgroups. In addition, knowledge about group member's subjective perceptions of their own ethnolinguistic vitality may help account for group member's intergroup attitudes, skills and motivations for second language learning, attitudes towards language usage and use of code switching strategies.

The above considerations illustrate the necessity of obtaining group member's subjective perceptions of their own and salient outgroups' ethnolinguistic vitality. Optimal use of such 'subjective' data would be best achieved when used in conjunction with 'objective' information concerning the group's actual ethnolinguistic vitality. Indeed, a combination of objective and subjective data may be extremely valuable in assessing the likelihood that ethnic minorities will survive as distinctive cultural and/or political entities in majority cultures. 'Subjective' vitality data may provide advance indication that a particular minority group is to mobilize in an ethnic revival phase not otherwise forseeable solely on the basis of 'objective' vitality information. In the absence of up to date 'objective' vitality information (e.g., between census years) 'subjective' vitality data could even be used to monitor the position of minorities as distinctive collective entities in intergroup settings. Such use of 'objective' and 'subjective' vitality information may be particularly relevant in numerous types of multi-cultural and multilingual settings (Fishman, 1980).

The questionnaire presented in the Appendix of this report was designed as a first attempt to measure subjective perceptions of ethnolinguistic vitality. Each

questionnaire item is designed to measure group member's subjective assessment of how they rate their own group relative to a salient outgroup on important vitality dimensions. The items included in the questionnaire cover the three main dimensions of vitality discussed in this report and in Giles, Bourhis & Taylor (1977). In Figure 1 below, each vitality factor covered by a questionnaire item is followed by the question number that appears in the actual 'Subjective Vitality Questionnaire' presented in the Appendix.

The questionnaire was designed to be administered to two distinct cultural groups in Melbourne, Australia. The first group consists of citizens of British stock forming the majority of the population in Melbourne. The second group consists of citizens of Greek descent who, though a numerical minority in Melbourne, represent the largest Greek population in the world outside Greece. The 'Subjective Vitality Questionnaire' is being administered to 16-17 year olds in the Melbourne Secondary School System. The results of this first pilot study will be factor analysed and correlated with measures such as motivations for second language learning, second and first language skills, ethnocentrism and authoritarianism, attitudes towards multiculturalism and attitudes towards language usage in Melbourne.

Further piloting of the 'subjective vitality questionnaire' will be undertaken in the Canadian setting.[1] Indeed, Canada with its large French and English population provides an ideal setting to test the validity of the 'Subjective Vitality Questionnaire'. French and English Canadian populations are represented in numerous permutations of majorities and minorities in different cities across Canada. Franco-Ontarians in Ottawa and Hamilton; Québécois in Montreal and Quebec; and Acadians in Moncton are the Francophone groups most interesting to compare with English Canadian groups in the above cities. French and English Canadians are particularly suitable for piloting the 'Subjective Vitality Questionnaire', as much up to date 'Objective' information already exists about these two groups in Canada. Other ethnic groups in Canada, such as West Indians, East Indians, Italian and Chinese, should also be surveyed though much less information about each of these groups is readily available for 'objective' comparison purposes.

The results of cross-cultural studies in Australia, Canada and elsewhere may reveal dimensions of vitality other than the three proposed so far by Giles, Bourhis & Taylor (1977). In addition, the results of 'Subjective Vitality Questionnaires' carried out in particular intergroup settings may show that dimensions considered most salient by ingroup members may be different from those considered most important by outgroup members. Finally, it is also possible that dimensions used by ingroup members to perceive the vitality of salient outgroups may be different from those used to perceive ingroup vitality.

Once piloted, the 'Subjective Vitality Questionnaire' could be broadened to tap not only respondents' assessment of ingroup/outgroup vitality, but also the perceived salience and evaluation of each item included in the questionnaire. For instance, respondents could not only be asked a) to assess the amount of institutional support received by in/outgroups but also b) how important such
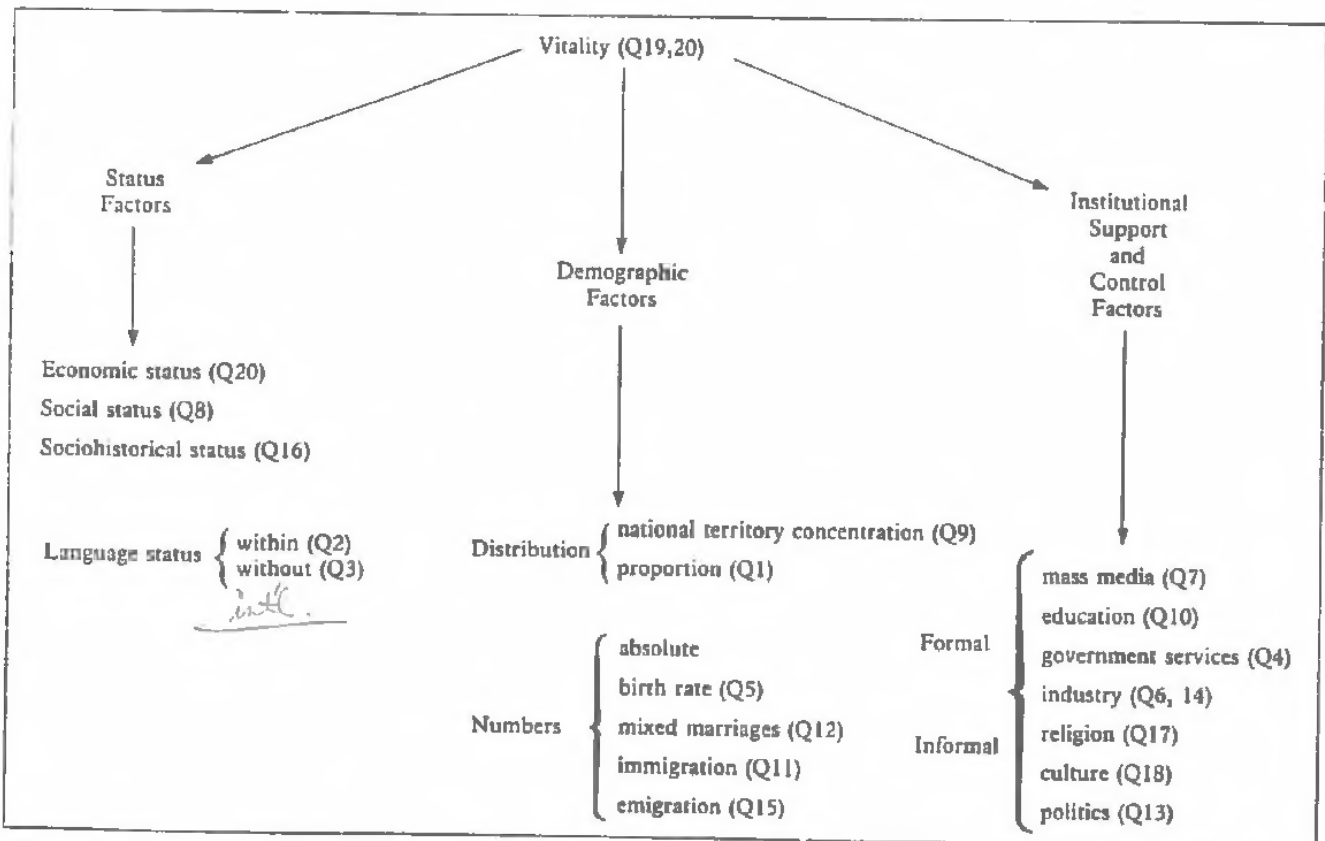
Figure 1: A taxonomy of the structural variables affecting ethnolinguistic vitality.

support is perceived to be for group survival and c) whether the trends reported are *evaluated* as being favourable or unfavourable for group survival. Such data should indicate whether or not group members care about the survival of their own group relative to outgroups and reveal which dimensions of vitality are considered crucial for ingroup and outgroup survival.

Pilot testing of both the wording and the items included herein should be done to insure the validity of the questionnaire in each cultural setting surveyed. A validated 'Subjective Vitality Questionnaire' could prove a powerful instrument for studying the dynamics of ethnic group relations and crosscultural communications in multilingual and multicultural societies such as Canada, the U.S.A. and Britain. Much now depends on the success of the pilot study presently being conducted in Melbourne, and on the possibility of conducting a similar series of pilot studies in selected cities across Canada.

Note

1. Piloting of the 'Subjective Vitality Questionnaire' in the Canadian setting is made possible through a grant to the first author from the Multiculturalism Directorate of Canada.

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Appendix

In this questionnaire, we are interested in what you know about certain groups in Melbourne. You may feel that you have insufficient information at your immediate disposal to answer these questions, yet it is *your impressions* that we are interested in. Please make sure that you answer EACH question by ticking in the position on every item. Since we are interested in comparisons between various groups in Melbourne, identical ratings given to two groups on any items will be taken to mean that you regard the two groups as being the same on that item. Please answer each item on the questionnaire and complete it on your own.

1. Estimate the *proportion* of the Melbourne population made up of the following groups:

People of British descent

0% |___|___|___|___|___|___|___| 100%

People of Greek descent

0% |___|___|___|___|___|___|___| 100%

2. How highly regarded are the following languages in Melbourne?

Greek

not at all |___|___|___|___|___|___|___| extremely highly

English

not at all |___|___|___|___|___|___|___| extremely highly

3. How highly regarded are the following languages *internationally*?

English

extremely high |___|___|___|___|___|___|___| not at all

Greek

extremely high |___|___|___|___|___|___|___| not at all

4. How often are the following languages used in *Melbourne government services* (eg., health clinics, social welfare etc.)?

Greek

not at all |_____| exclusively

English

not at all |_____| exclusively

5. Estimate the *birth rates* of the following groups in Melbourne:-

People of British descent

decreasing |_____| increasing

People of Greek descent

decreasing |_____| increasing

6. How much control do the following groups have over *economic and business* matters in Melbourne?

People of Greek descent

none at all |_____| exclusive

People of British descent

none at all |_____| exclusive

7. How well-represented are the following languages in the Melbourne *massmedia* (eg., TV, radio, newspapers)?

English

extremely well |_____| not at all

Greek

extremely well |_____| not at all

8. How highly regarded are the following groups in Melbourne?

People of British descent

not at all |_____| extremely highly

People of Greek descent

not at all |_____| extremely highly

9. In all parts of Melbourne where the following groups live, to what extent are they in the majority or minority?

People of Greek descent

very small minority |_____| very large majority

People of British descent

very small minority |_____| very large majority

10. How much are the following languages taught in Melbourne *schools*?

English

not at all |_____| exclusively

Greek

not at all |_____| exclusively

11. How many of the following groups *immigrate* into Melbourne each year?

People of Greek descent

very many |_____| none at all

People of British descent

very many |_____| none at all

12. To what extent do the following *marry only* within their own groups?

People of British descent

not at all |_____| exclusively

People of Greek descent

not at all |_____| exclusively

13. How much *political* power do the following groups have in Melbourne?

People of Greek descent

complete |_____| none at all

People of British descent

complete |_____| none at all

14. How well-represented are the following languages in Melbourne *business institutions*?

English

not at all |_____| exclusively

Greek

not at all |_____| exclusively

15. How many of the following groups *emigrate from* Melbourne to other countries each year?

People of Greek descent

very many |_____| none at all

People of British descent

very many |_____| none at all

16. How *proud* of their cultural history and achievements are the following groups in Melbourne?

People of Greek descent

not at all ——|——|——|——|——|——|——|——|—— extremely

People of British descent

not at all ——|——|——|——|——|——|——|——|—— extremely

17. How frequently are the following languages used in Melbourne *churches* and places of religious worship?

English

exclusively ——|——|——|——|——|——|——|——|—— not at all

Greek

exclusively ——|——|——|——|——|——|——|——|—— not at all

18. How well-represented are the following groups in the cultural life of Melbourne (e.g. festivals, concerts, art exhibitions)?

People of Greek descent

not at all ——|——|——|——|——|——|——|——|—— extremely

People of British descent

not at all ——|——|——|——|——|——|——|——|—— extremely

19. How *strong* and *active* do you feel the following groups are in Melbourne?

People of British descent

not at all ——|——|——|——|——|——|——|——|—— extremely

People of Greek descent

not at all ——|——|——|——|——|——|——|——|—— extremely

20. How *wealthy* do you feel the following groups are in Melbourne?

People of British descent

not at all ——|——|——|——|——|——|——|——|—— extremely

People of Greek descent

not at all ——|——|——|——|——|——|——|——|—— extremely

21. How *strong* and *active* do you feel the following groups will be 20 to 30 years from now?

People of British descent

not at all ——|——|——|——|——|——|——|——|—— extremely

People of Greek descent

not at all ——|——|——|——|——|——|——|——|—— extremely

22. In general, how much contact is there between people of British and Greek descent?

very much ——|——|——|——|——|——|——|——|—— none at all.